

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 and 7-43 are pending in the present application. The present amendment includes a clarifying amendment to claim 1. Claims 12-43 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Claim 1 sets forth a method of assembling a photofinishing order from a customer, wherein the order includes at least one photofinishing component, retail component or general component. The method comprises associating a customer order identification with the photofinishing order; automatically dispensing at least one first type of photofinishing component onto a first conveyer based on the customer order identification so as to form an order group on the first conveyer which includes the at least one first type of photofinishing component; conveying the order group from the first conveyer to a second conveyer; automatically dispensing at least one second type of retail or general component into the order group on the second conveyer to create an assembled product group; and shrink wrapping the assembled product group.

The applied reference to Beggiao does not disclose the concept of shrink wrapping an assembled product group as required by the claims of the present invention. The reference to Van de Ven et al. which was cited to show a shrink wrapping feature is not believed to correct the deficiencies of Beggiao with respect to the claimed invention. More specifically, the reference to Van de Ven et al. does not provide for a shrink wrapping feature where a first type of photofinishing component and a second type of retail component or general component that make up part of a photofinishing order are conveyed and assembled into an order group to form an assembled product group; and thereafter, the assembled product group is shrink wrapped. Van de Ven et al. relates to an apparatus wherein a laser printer prints documents that are stacked to form a package. These documents are similar sheets that are normally of the same size and orientation, and are stacked into a package that can thereafter be conveyed to shrink wrap equipment or manual equipment that applies a band or strap to the stacked sheets. Therefore, the documents that are wrapped in Van de Ven et al. are known and are the same type of products, i.e. paper sheets. The documents in Van de Ven et al. are not distinct photographic based type products that include a first type of photofinishing component and a second type of retail component or general component of a customer photofinishing order. The components of the present invention can be unknown distinct types of products of different shapes as described in the present invention.

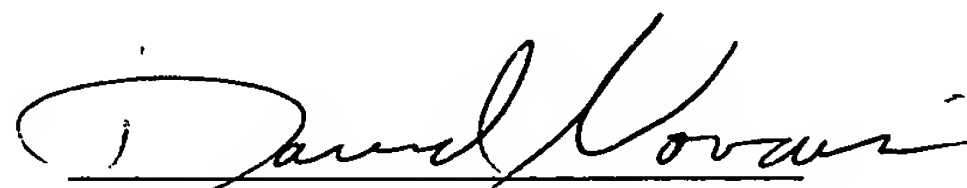
Further, absent Applicants' disclosure one having ordinary skill in the art would not have combined the applied references as suggested in the Office Action. More specifically, Beggiao relates to a method of processing photographs in a customer order, wherein the elements in the customer order can be directed to a pallet. The reference to Van de Ven et al. relates to an automated document handling system that includes high speed laser printers and is adapted to apply a shrink wrap over similar paper sheets in a stack. First, there is no suggestion or disclosure in Beggiao that the elements of the photofinishing order are to be shrink wrapped. Also, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Van de Ven et al. that an order that includes a photofinishing component and a retail component or general component is to be assembled into a group and shrink wrapped. Van de Ven et al. discloses that similar products which are paper sheets are to be stacked and shrink wrapped. Absent Applicants' disclosure, there would be no showing or suggestion to shrink wrapped the photofinishing, retail and/or general components as claimed in the environment of a photofinishing order.

Accordingly, the references to Beggiao and Van de Ven et al., whether considered individually or in combination, are not believed to anticipate or make obvious the specific features required by claim 1.

Claims 2-4 and 7-11 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1 and set forth further unique features of the invention which are also not believed to be shown or suggested in the applied references. Therefore, these claims are also believed to be allowable.

In view of the foregoing comments, it is submitted that the inventions defined by each of claims 1-4 and 7-11 are patentable, and a favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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